

Making Ripples

One Hundred Wonders on One Acre

by Amanda Bancroft

In the very first Making Ripples column in 2012, I asked: “How can we make *every* aspect of our life create something wonderful in the world?” Most of the answers are, for us, one hundred wonders on one acre of land.

There are 43,560 square feet in an acre. Our earthbag house is 425 square feet, which is 102.5 times smaller. That means approximately 100 of our houses could fit on that acre of land! Instead of putting 100 houses on an acre, we’d like to put 100 wonders on it. The potential of just one acre is amazing, and it’s especially astounding when we begin to carefully consider ways to meet all of our basic needs by benefitting not just ourselves as a family but also our local community, national and international organizations, and the earth.

The colorful square graphic represents, as a concept, one acre of land composed of one hundred squares. The squares represent how much space each color’s topic would consume, not their actual locations. Each topic contains a handful of “wonders”: wonderful things that don’t just meet our needs, but have a broader benefit to the world.

In the red square will be our earthbag home, with passive solar design, composting toilet and other sustainable features, as well as a home office where we can produce webinars and videos on sustainability topics, while continuing to blog and offer online capacity building classes and technology help for non-profits locally, nationally, and globally.

The blue zone is for rainwater harvesting to irrigate the gardens, and aquaponics beds to recycle greywater using plants and fish. Conserving our drinking water helps everyone.

The two orange squares are for members of the community to park their carpooling vehicles and bicycles, and provide space for potlucks, educational presentations, and free community hands-on workshops on topics ranging from sustainable building, wildlife gardening, and much more.

Storage happens in the yellow square, for our earthbag bicycle hut. This space is for storing tools, gardening supplies, and materials that can be donated to Habitat for Humanity or other organizations’ projects.

The light green squares are for organic garden beds with vegetables and herbs, as well as a pollinator-friendly, wildlife-welcoming eco-therapy garden that counselors can use to promote healing in those needing a touch of nature.

The dark green squares represent the majority of our acre: a forest dedicated to eliminating invasive, non-native species, introducing and protecting native habitat for animals and plants like the Ozark Chinquapin, and a nature trail educating visitors about conservation.

We need your help to accomplish these one hundred wonders. We're hoping to partner with individuals and organizations, and our biggest need is the acre itself. Have you seen an acre of potential, or want to see it become real? Contact us at MakeSomeRipples@gmail.com

Ripples is a blog connecting people to resources on sustainable living while chronicling their off-grid journey and supporting the work of non-profit organizations. Read more on this topic and others at www.RipplesBlog.org